



For the future you want

## **EDINBURGH COLLEGE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF 24 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**14:00 Boardroom, Milton Road Campus**

**Present:** Bruce Cassidy; Audrey Cumberland; Ian Diamond (Chair); Lesley Drummond; Seoras Hearton; Sam Hogrefe; Ross Laird; Ann Landels; Niki McKenzie; Nigel Paul; Gwen Raez; Azra Sharif-Qayyum; Judith Sischy; Jeanette Stevenson

**In attendance:** Jon Buglass; Nick Croft; Michael Jeffrey; Jonny Pearson; Marcus Walker (Clerk); Alan Williamson

**Observers:** David Bass (Advance HE); Don Gluckstein; Andy Shenstone (Advance HE)

#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Carla Ford and Fiona Riddoch.
- 1.2 The Chair welcomed Seoras Hearton, the newly elected ECSA Student Vice-President (Welfare) to his first meeting as a Board Member.
- 1.3 The Chair, on behalf of the Board, welcomed Allan Colquhoun, Chair of the Development Trust, and Julie Forster, Interim Development Trust Manager, to the meeting for Item 3.
- 1.4 The Chair welcomed Andy Shenstone and David Bass of Advance HE to the meeting as observers. The Board NOTED that Advance HE had been appointed to conduct an external Board effectiveness review and, as part of the process, would be observing a range of Board and committee meetings over the coming months.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 2.1 The Board NOTED declarations of interest from the Vice Chair in relation to Item 3, in light of their position as a member of the Edinburgh College Development Trust.

### **3. EDINBURGH COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT TRUST ANNUAL UPDATE**

- 3.1 The Board NOTED an update from the Edinburgh College Development Trust on its recent successes, and the challenges it had faced, over the past year. The Chair of the Development Trust advised the Board that the Trust's accounts for the financial year 2018/19 would be signed in November 2019, and would show a significant increase in income of 40% on last year, against a modest increase in expenditure of 7.6%.
- 3.2 The Board NOTED that the Development Trust had organised and delivered its first alumni relations event in September 2018 to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Milton Road site for the Leith Nautical College. The Chair of the Development Trust advised the Board that sixty-three people had attended a dinner and several hundred alumni and members of the public attended an exhibition as part of the annual Doors Open festival.
- 3.3 The Board NOTED the membership of the Development Trust, and the current governance arrangement in place. The Interim Development Trust Manager advised the Board that the Trust was currently working with the College, through a joint working group, and would present a business case proposal to the Board on 10 December - with recommendations to strengthen both its impact and operating position.
- 3.4 The Board DISCUSSED the success of the Development Trust over the past year, and the potential for fundraising through alumni activities.
- 3.5 The Chair thanked the Chair of the Development Trust for his update and, on behalf of the Board, commended the valuable work of the Trust to date.

***The Chair of the Edinburgh College Development Trust and the Interim Development Trust Manager left the meeting***

### **4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- 4.1 The Board APPROVED the minutes from 18 June 2019 as an accurate record of the meeting.

### **5. MATTERS ARISING**

- 5.1 Actions from the previous meeting were complete, overtaken or on the agenda.
- 5.2 The Board NOTED that a Finance Workshop, led by the Chief Operating Officer, held on 17 September had been well received by the Board members in attendance. The Clerk advised the Board that a further event would be held for members who could not attend the September training session.
- 5.3 The Board NOTED that an update from the Principal with regards to the repayment of £2.9m to the SFC for advanced voluntary severance funding from 2018/19 to 2020/21, as discussed under Minutes 8.1.5/18.06.19. The Principal advised the Board

that no progress had been made with regards to this matter, however, discussions with the SFC would continue.

- 5.4 The Board NOTED that the Principal had also held discussions with the SFC regarding further Digital funding. The Board DISCUSSED the importance of improved digital infrastructure for the College and the sector, and AGREED that the Principal and the Chair should continue to push forward the digital agenda with the SFC.

## **6. STRATEGIC DISCUSSION: ENVIROMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

- 6.1 The Board NOTED a presentation on the development of a new Environmental Sustainability Strategy for Edinburgh College. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research outlined the context in which the development of a new Strategy should be considered, including the UK's declaration of a climate emergency on 01 May and incoming climate change legislation. Further to this, the Board NOTED the voice of young people in the debate around environmental sustainability and their engagement in a Global Climate Strike on 20 September.
- 6.2 The Board NOTED the indicative vision of the College to 'be the preeminent college for environmental sustainability through its learning, teaching, partnerships and operations'. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research advised the Board of proposed actions and measures to be considered by the College's own Sustainability Steering Group in the development of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.
- 6.3 The Board NOTED two challenge questions regarding the coverage of the indicative vision, the breadth of the actions outlined and the suitability of the measures. In response to the questions posed the Board DISCUSSED the following:
- (i) Becoming the 'pre-eminent college' within the sector in the context of sustainability, and the aims of colleges to participate with the university sector;
  - (ii) the aim of becoming a carbon neutral college and the challenges of such a vision;
  - (iii) the use of the curriculum to expose students to environmental sustainability matters, such as 'throwaway fashion';
  - (iv) matters relating to student travel, including the need for engagement with local councils around increases to public transport and cycle access;
  - (v) the visibility of KPIs on sustainability to the Board, and the need for accountability within the College;
  - (vi) the effective engagement of students' passion and ambition to support sustainable activities;
  - (vii) the need to make students, staff and stakeholders aware that the College is an environmentally conscious organisation.
- 6.4 The Board NOTED that the College should take positive steps forward to lead the sector in initiatives relating to environmental sustainability, prior to any new climate change legislation being implemented. The Board DISCUSSED the level of its

ambitions and AGREED that the Executive should consider whether the College could be carbon neutral by 2030.

- 6.5 The Board AGREED that a Draft Environmental Sustainability Strategy should be presented to the next meetings of the Policy & Resources Committee and then the Board, for consideration by members.

## **7. EDINBURGH COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ECSA)**

### ***The ECSA Director joined the meeting***

#### **7.1 ECSA QUARTERLY REPORT**

7.1.1 The Board NOTED a report from ECSA covering a range of activities at the College since the three Full-Time Sabbatical Officer were appointed in 01 July.

7.1.2 The Board NOTED that ECSA were in the process of recruiting new class representatives, and commencing training sessions before the end of September. The ECSA Vice President (Welfare) advised the Board that class reps conferences would take place in early October and would concentrate on the retention and support of students through their first months at Edinburgh College.

#### **7.2 ECSA PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 2019/20**

7.2.1 The Board NOTED the ECSA Priority Objectives for 2019/20, based around the 'Pillars of Actions' outlined in the ECSA Strategic Plan 2017-20. The ECSA Vice President (Welfare) informed the Board that 2019/20 would be another exciting year in the development of the Students' Associations, especially as it would begin the process of drafting its second Strategic Plan.

7.2.2 The Board welcomed the clear and concise report and DISCUSSED the following in relation to the priority objectives outlined:

- (i) ECSA's continued engagement with part-time students and apprentices;
- (ii) the housing advice provided by ECSA, and the potential provision to provide employment rights guidance;
- (iii) the men's health guidance provided by ECSA, and the use of links with other organisations to increase the support provided;
- (iv) ECSA's current work with the College to support mental health and safeguarding initiatives.

7.2.3 The Board AGREED to endorse the key priorities outlined, and wished ECSA well in achieving their targets over the course of the year.

### ***The ECSA Director left the meeting***

## **8. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **8.1 AUDIT & RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE**

#### **8.1.1 SUMMARY TOP RISK REGISTER**

The Board NOTED that the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee had not met since 29 May. The Chair of the Audit & Risk Assurance Committee advised members that the Committee would meet twice in the next Board cycle to appropriately consider matters relating to the end of year accounts to 31 July 2019.

The Board NOTED the Summary Top Level Risk Register (TRR) to August 2019, and the changes in top level risks since the last meeting of the Board on 18 June.

The Board DISCUSSED the risk score relating to 'Cyber security breaches within the College' and NOTED that the scoring for this risk could not be reduced until an information asset audit had been completed by the College. The Head of Communications, Policy and Research informed the Board that the College had no incidents of cyber security breaches, and was confident that it would become GDPR compliant before the end of the academic year - inline with the current project timescale.

The Board DISCUSSED the arrangements in place around student safeguarding, and NOTED the process that all staff and Board members were impact assessed and, if appropriate, underwent a PVG check at the point of appointment.

### **8.2 POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

#### **8.2.1 MINUTES 20.08.19**

The Board NOTED the Policy & Resources Committee minutes from the meeting held on 20 August.

The Board NOTED that a discussion on the most appropriate strategic direction for the nursery provision at the College would be discussed at its next meeting on 12 November.

The Board APPROVED minor amendments to the Policy & Resources Committee Terms of Reference relating to its 'Purpose', as endorsed by members of the Committee.

#### **8.2.2 RECRUITMENT & RETENTION DASHBOARD**

The Board NOTED an indicative final credit position of the College for the 2018/19 academic year was 188,326. The Vice Principal Education and Skills advised the Board that the College had exceeded its activity target (of 187,969) for a third successive year.

The Board NOTED that the College had witnessed a 4% decrease in its number of full-time students, and an increase of 96% in the number of part-time students over a three-year period. The Vice Principal advised the Board that a 2% decrease

in the final credit positions between 2017/18 and 2018/19 was attributed to a shift in full-time to part-time enrolment, and in particular, the effects of the introduction of Flexible Workforce Development Funding.

The Board NOTED that the SFC had set the College an activity target of 187,947 for the 2019/20 academic year, approximately 22 credits less than the previous year. The Vice Principal advised the Board that the number of applications to the College had increased by 28% since 2017/18, whilst the number of offers made had increased 24%.

The Board welcomed the achievement of the 2018/19 activity target, and DISCUSSED the following in relation to the Recruitment and Retention dashboard:

- (i) The impact of school leavers being encouraged to go directly to university, and the need to ensure that potential students are aware of the benefits of a college education;
- (ii) the drop-out rates of students at Scottish universities, and the potential for articulation of the students to colleges - to improve retention rates;
- (iii) the downward trend in full-time HE student numbers across the college sector;
- (iv) the need to generate strategic relationships between the College and selected universities, to ensure appropriate articulation arrangements.

The Board DISCUSSED the 'track exercise' used by publicly and non-publicly funded bodies to assess whether the size of a class is economically viable, and supports a transparent approach to costing. The Vice Principal Education and Skills advised the Board that such an approach was already in use at the College. The Board AGREED that an update on the 'track exercise' used by the College should be provided to the Policy & Resources Committee at its next meeting.

### 8.2.3 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO JULY 2019

The Board NOTED the financial performance of the College as outlined in the Management Accounts to July 2019. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that the External Auditors were currently reviewing the end of year accounts to 31 July 2019.

## 8.3 ACADEMIC COUNCIL

### 8.3.1 *MINUTES 13.09.19*

The Board NOTED the Academic Council minutes from the meeting held on 13 September.

The Board NOTED that on 18 June it had held a discussion relating to the current academic staff appraisal mechanisms in place at the College - in response to a recent internal audit report. Further to this, the Academic Council reviewed current arrangements and recommended that the Executive consider a re-launch of Enhance, a development tool for staff, to all lecturing staff.

The Board NOTED that the Academic Council had considered matters relating to safeguarding and counselling services and agreed that a presentation should be provided to the Board at a future meeting, to highlight the positive work being done to support students and the significant pressures placed on College resources.

#### 8.4 CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

##### 8.4.1 *MINUTES 27.08.19*

The Board NOTED the Corporate Development Committee minutes from the meeting held on 27 August.

The Board NOTED that the Committee would conduct 'deep dives' into international and domestic income, contracting and costing, and the College brand at each of its meeting in 2019/20. Further to this, the Chair of the Corporate Development Committee advised the Board that individual Community Planning Partners would be invited to each meeting of the Committee as part of an ongoing programme of engagement.

The Board DISCUSSED the opportunities currently available to engage in a commercial and international workshop, to further develop their knowledge of the commercial environment in which the College operates. The Board AGREED that arrangements for an optional workshop should be made and a suitable date confirmed with Board members.

The Board APPROVED amendments to the Corporate Development Committee Terms of Reference to align its 'Role & Remit' to the three key strategic areas agreed by members in May 2019.

#### 8.5 REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

##### 8.5.1 *MINUTES 11.06.19*

The Board NOTED the Remuneration Committee minutes from the meeting held on 11 June. The Chair of the Remuneration Committee advised the Board that a verbal update from the meeting had been provided to members of the Board on 18 June.

### 9. **PRINCIPAL & CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

9.1 The Board NOTED a report from the Principal covering a range of activities at the College since the last Board meeting.

9.2 The Board NOTED that the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work, Derek Mackay MSP, had commissioned the Principal, and her counterpart at City of Glasgow College, to produce a report on the economic impact of colleges in Scotland. The Principal advised members that the published report would be considered by the Board at its meeting on 10 December.

- 9.3 The Board NOTED that, following discussions with the SFC, the College would receive funding to develop an outline business case for a new Construction facility at the Granton Campus. The Principal advised the Board that prior to commencing the development of an outline business case an initial equality impact assessment would take place.

## 10. GOVERNANCE REPORT

- 10.1 The Board NOTED that, on 30 August, a notification had been circulated to Board members that the Chair, Professor Sir Ian Diamond, would step down from this role - following his by appointment Her Majesty the Queen as the UK's National Statistician. The Chair advised the Board that the Scottish Government had indicated that they were content for the Vice Chair of the Board, Ann Landels, to act as Interim Chair from 01 November until a new Regional Chair was appointed - subject to approval by the Board.
- 10.2 The Board DISCUSSED the recommendation of the Scottish Government and APPROVED the appointment of the Vice Chair as Interim Chair of the Edinburgh College Board of Management under the same terms and conditions as the outgoing Chair. The Clerk advised the Board that for continuity purposes the Interim Chair would remain as Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee for the interim period.
- 10.3 The Board NOTED that a call for nominations from non-executive Board members to come forward to act as Interim Vice Chair and Senior Independent Member, from 01 November until a new Regional Chair was appointed, would take place in October. The Board AGREED that the call for nominations and the approval process would be conducted via correspondence, and the outcome formally recorded at the next meeting of the Board.
- 10.4 The Board NOTED progress against the 2018/19 Improvement Plan and the one action which remained outstanding, which related to *'the introduction of a critical debrief on selected decisions as part of an annual performance review'*. The Board DISCUSSED progress against the 2018/19 Improvement Plan and AGREED that the outstanding action should be incorporated into the draft 2019/20 Improvement Plan, arising from the recommendations of the 2019 External Board Effectiveness Review. The Clerk advised the Board that recommendations from the External Board Effectiveness Review would be considered at the next meeting of the Board on 10 December.
- 10.5 The Board NOTED that its first Board Development Day of the academic year would take place on 29 October. The Board DISCUSSED the itinerary for the event and AGREED that a half-day session should consider the progress of the College against its 2017-22 Strategic Plan and KPIs, and review developments relating to the external environment in which the College operates.

## 11. NATIONAL REPORT: 'THE COLLEGE OF THE FUTURE'

- 11.1 The Board NOTED that an Independent Commission on the College of the Future, chaired by Sir Ian Diamond, had commenced in March 2019 to investigate what was



required of colleges from 2030 onwards. The Chair advised the Board that the Commission would be reporting its findings in March 2020, and would undertake a wide range of engagement with key stakeholders over the course of the year.

- 11.2 The Board NOTED the key aims and outputs of the Independent Commission, and the Commissioners and Expert Panel involved. The Chair informed the Board that the Principal & Chief Executive of Edinburgh College was participating in the process as a Commissioner.
- 11.3 The Board DISCUSSED the work of the Independent Commission and the process of connecting with stakeholders to ensure that the UK and Scottish Government were fully engaged with the process. The Board AGREED that once the final report was published, in March 2020, representatives of the Commission should be invited to the 24 March 2020 to present their findings and discuss outputs with members.

## **12. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT 2019**

### ***The Health & Safety Manager joined the meeting***

- 12.1 The Board NOTED an Annual Health & Safety Report 2019, as presented by the Health & Safety Manager, which included an updated Health & Safety Policy.
- 12.2 The Board DISCUSSED the Health & Safety Teams targets for the current academic year, and APPROVED the amendments to the 2019 Health & Safety Policy. The Chair thanked the Health & Safety Manager for his report and wished his team success in reach its annual targets and improving health & safety awareness across the college.

### ***The Health & Safety Manager left the meeting***

## **13. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT**

- 13.1 The Board NOTED a report outlining the volume of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the College between July 2018 and June 2019. The Chief Operating Officer advised the Board that in the last 12 months the College had responded to 98% of all FOIs within a period of 20 working days.

## **14. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

### **14.1 AGENDA PLANNER 2019/20**

- 14.1.1 The Board NOTED an agenda planner for the academic year, which aimed to provide members with an opportunity to review upcoming items of business. The Chair advised the Board that it was important to follow an appropriate plan of work in order to ensure that future agendas cover all areas within its remit.

## 14.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF MICROSOFT OFFICE 365

- 14.2.1 The Board NOTED the efforts of the IT Team across all campuses to move all computers across to Microsoft Office 365. The Support Staff Board Members advised the Board that this significant undertaking had been achieved by the IT Team with minimal disruption over the Summer period. The Board AGREED that efforts of the IT Team should be recognised and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## 14.3 DEPARTURE OF THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

- 14.3.1 Board NOTED that the Chair of the Board, Sir Ian Diamond, would be standing down as Regional Board Chair on 31 October. The Vice Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked the Chair for his significant contribution to Edinburgh College since his appointment in March 2018.
- 14.3.2 The Chair informed the Board that it had been a privilege to serve on the Board of Edinburgh College as the Regional Chair. Further to this, the Chair wished to thank both Board and Executive colleagues for their continued support during his period of tenure.

## 15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 15.1 The next meeting of the Board of Management shall take place on 10 December 2019, in the Boardroom, Milton Road Campus.

***Meeting closed at 17:00***